United Nations A/70/299

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 August 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 73 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/122, presents the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery at its nineteenth session, held in Geneva from 24 to 28 November 2014. It also provides information on other recommendations adopted by the Board.

* A/70/150.

15-12530 (E) 020915

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I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, by which it established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. It presents the recommendations for grants adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its nineteenth session, held in Geneva from 24 to 28 November 2014. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 10 December 2014.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. In line with resolution 46/122, the Fund was established with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the Fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a board of trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, in issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution. In January 2014, the Secretary-General renewed the mandates of Asma Jahangir (Pakistan), George Omona (Uganda) and Michael Beresford Dottridge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) for a final three-year term ending on 31 December 2016. On 10 July 2014, the Secretary-General appointed for a first three-year term, renewable once and ending on 10 July 2017, Leonardo Sakamato (Brazil) and Nevena Vučković-Šahović (Serbia), replacing Virginia Herrera Murillo (Costa Rica) and Klara Skrivankova (Czech Republic). On 13 July 2015, following the resignation of Ms. Jahangir in October 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Renu Rajbhandari (Nepal) for a first term, renewable once and ending on 31 December 2016.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

5. In accordance with the mandate of the Fund as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund are individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms

of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the Fund's guidelines, which were revised at the eighteenth session of the Board. Beneficiaries of projects must be victims of contemporary forms of slavery and, when applicable, members of their families. Contemporary forms of slavery that qualify for project grants include traditional slavery, serfdom, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour, forced and early marriage, the sale of wives and inherited widows, trafficking in persons and human organs, sexual slavery, the sale of children, the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in armed conflict.

6. Priority in allocating grants is accorded to projects aimed at reparation, empowerment and integration of victims of contemporary forms of slavery through the provision of direct assistance. Such assistance may include medical, psychological, social, legal, humanitarian and educational assistance, vocational or skills training or other assistance in support of an independent livelihood. Detailed information on the types of assistance provided through the projects financed by the Fund, as well as their impact on beneficiaries, can be found at www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund. Brochures and leaflets on the Fund are also displayed there.

7. By 1 March 2014, the deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2015, the Fund had received 126 applications. After the applications were screened by the secretariat of the Board, 93 were examined by the Board at its nineteenth session, held from 24 to 28 November 2014.

8. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2016 was 1 March 2015. The admissible applications will be examined by the Board at its twentieth session, to be held in Geneva from 23 to 27 November 2015.

B. Monitoring and evaluation by the secretariat of the Board

9. At its nineteenth session, the Board was presented with 93 applications for project grants for 2015. Before the session, 42 of the projects had been evaluated in situ by the Board secretariat, Board members, OHCHR country and regional offices and human rights components of peacekeeping missions.

III. Financial situation of the Fund

10. Notwithstanding the persistent efforts of the members and secretariat of the Board, including the dissemination through diverse publications of the Fund's role in supporting organizations providing direct assistance to victims, the Fund remains underfunded. Between 2009 and 2014, as a consequence of the global financial crisis, annual voluntary contributions to the Fund fell by some 20 per cent, from $886,482 in 2009 to $683,005 in 2014. To meaningfully fulfil its mandate and adequately respond to the needs of victims, the Fund requires at least $2 million in contributions each year. The contributions received in 2014 covered only a third of that target.

11. Tables 1 and 2 show the contributions and pledges received for 2014 and up to 31 July 2015.

Table 1
Contributions and pledges received for 2014
(United States dollars)

Donor	*Amount*	*Date of receipt*
Australia	174 520	25 November 2014
Germany	341 997	27 March 2014
Greece	25 031	11 December 2014
Holy See	916	11 March 2014
Holy See	922	28 October 2014
India	25 000	28 October 2013
Luxembourg	12 391	18 February 2015
Portugal	6 226	23 December 2014
Qatar	10 000	22 September 2014
Netherlands	50 000	29 December 2014
Turkey	6 000	30 May 2014
United Arab Emirates	30 000	5 June 2014
Total	**683 005**	

Table 2
Contributions and pledges received from 1 January to 31 July 2015
(United States dollars)

Donor	*Amount*	*Date of receipt*
Germany	265 111	24 March 2015
India	25 000	26 January 2015
Luxembourg	10 834	27 April 2015
South Africa	7 845	30 March 2015
Total	**308 790**	

IV. Nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees

12. The nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees was held in Geneva from 14 to 28 November 2014. During the session, the Board held an informational meeting with 24 Member States. It also held meetings with the Director of the Human Rights Treaties Division and the Chief of the External Outreach Service of OHCHR to discuss the critical financial situation and the need to enhance visibility and outreach to showcase the impact of the Fund's work.

A. Grant-making recommendations

13. The Board was presented with 93 applications for project grants, amounting to some $1.4 million, that had been evaluated by its secretariat. It decided to accord

priority to the review of 61 projects that had been highly recommended for funding by the secretariat. It recommended the approval of 44 project grants, for a total of $588,900. The shortage of funding meant that the Board could not increase the average grant size to $20,000, as it had recommended at its eighteenth session.

14. Through those grants, the Fund will assist non-governmental organizations in 35 countries by supporting 16 projects in Asia, 12 in Africa, 5 in Eastern Europe, 4 in Latin American and the Caribbean and 7 in the countries of the Western European and other States group. Through the projects, 29,000 victims are expected to be provided with redress and rehabilitation services after having been subjected to contemporary forms of slavery, such as the worst forms of child labour, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, bonded and forced labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation.

15. Figures I and II illustrate the breakdown of the 44 approved grants, by region and by type of contemporary slavery.

Figure I
Grants awarded in 2015, by region

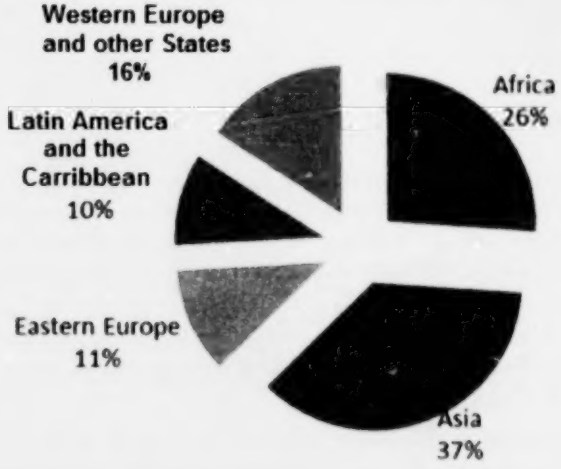
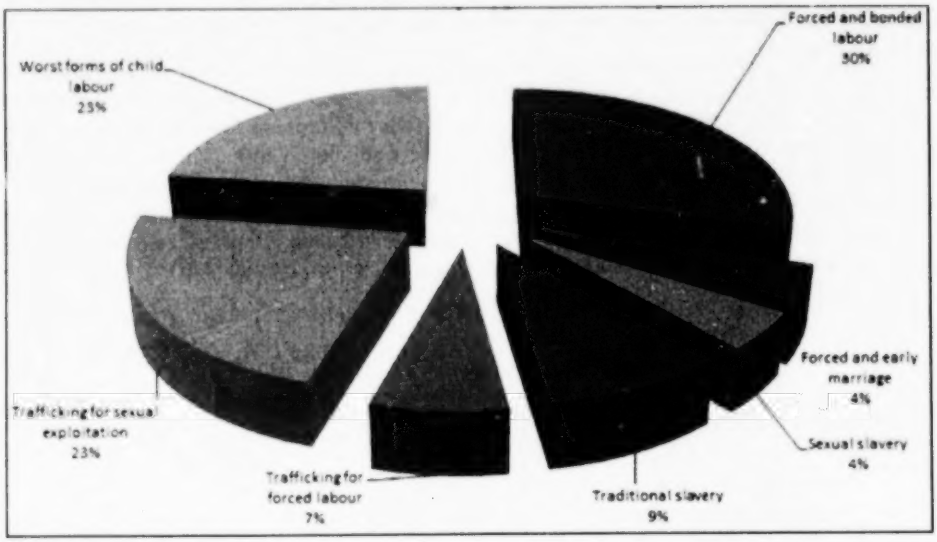


Figure II
Grants awarded in 2015, by type of contemporary slavery



B. Policy recommendations

16. The Board highlighted the need for enhanced coordination with other actors working on modern slavery throughout the United Nations system to avoid overlap and competition for resources and to ensure that the needs of victims were adequately covered and their rights protected. Consequently, meetings were held with relevant actors (see sect. C).

17. The Board underlined the need to promote the Fund as a platform for sharing knowledge on effective methodologies for the delivery of assistance to victims and agreed to place available reference materials online.

18. The Board agreed, to better balance the forms of slavery in the Fund's portfolio for 2016, to give special attention to applications relating to traditional slavery, forced labour, the worst forms of child labour and forced and early marriage, as well as to project proposals aimed at providing legal assistance to victims of modern slavery, especially those supporting strategic litigation.

C. Cooperation with United Nations agencies and mechanisms

19. The Board held meetings with other mandate holders and agencies working on issues of common interest.

20. On 26 November 2014, the Board held a meeting with the Head of the International Labour Organization Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour, Beate Andrees, to discuss collaboration. The Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, adopted in 2014, which provides for protection and remedies for victims and requires States parties to develop national plans of action, was highlighted as a crucial new tool in efforts to combat modern slavery.

21. The Board held conference calls with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences, Urmila Bhoola, and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, to discuss collaboration. The former updated the Board on her visit to the Niger, where she had met a former grantee of the Fund. She expressed her deep appreciation for the work carried out by the Fund, agreed to continue to recommend reliable organizations to the Fund's secretariat and committed herself to calling upon Member States to contribute to the Fund. The latter provided a briefing to the Board on specific issues on which she intended to focus during her mandate.

22. The Board also held a conference call with the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, to discuss funding priorities and criteria for support. It was agreed to continue to share lists of applicants and grantees to avoid funding overlaps, as well as best practice in terms of provision of assistance to victims, project monitoring and trust fund management.

23. Lastly, the Board met the OHCHR Adviser on Trafficking to discuss ways to strengthen interaction, including by seeking her help to identify potential grantees and keeping the Board informed about the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons.

D. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

24. The Secretary-General made the following statement to commemorate the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, observed on 2 December 2014:

> The United Nations estimates that there are more than 18 million people kept as slave labourers. Each day, women are trafficked, sold and locked in brothels. Every day, young girls are forcibly married, sexually abused or exploited as domestic workers. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, boys and girls are still working in appalling conditions. Men, separated from their families, are still being locked in clandestine factories, working in situations of bonded labour with negligible wages and remote chances of ever repaying their debts.
>
> In the nineteenth century, the international community came together to declare slavery an affront to our common humanity. Today, Governments, civil society and the private sector must unite to eradicate all contemporary forms of slavery, including forced labour.
>
> There are grounds for optimism. The lifelong campaigner against child-bonded labour, Kailash Satyarthi, is this year's co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, helping to raise awareness about the issue. The recent End Child Slavery week has focused global attention on this continuing abuse of human rights. This year's first observance of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons (30 July), as well as the strengthening of international law on forced labour, has reinforced the determination of many to banish these barbaric practices.
>
> But much more needs to be done. I urge Member States, businesses, foundations and other donors to support the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery so that civil society can carry out

essential projects for the rehabilitation and redress of victims. We also need clear-sighted strategies, strong national legislation and a commitment to coordinate the fight against this crime. I urge all States to ratify and implement the relevant instruments of international law — in particular the new protocol drawn up by the International Labour Organization, which is designed to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labour.

Together, let us do our utmost for the millions of victims throughout the world who are held in slavery and deprived of their human rights and dignity.

25. On that day, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, also issued a joint statement on the need for greater accountability to eradicate rampant modern-day slavery.

V. How to contribute to the Fund

26. The Fund depends on voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. Donors should indicate "for the Slavery Fund, account SH" on a payment order. For information on how to contribute, donors are requested to contact:

Secretariat of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
E-mail: slaveryfund@ohchr.org
Tel: 41 22 917 9376
Fax: 41 22 917 9017

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

27. **Owing to the funding constraints, at its nineteenth session the Board of Trustees was able to recommend only 44 grants for 2015, for a total of $588,900. The Board continues to be concerned about the insufficient level of contributions received and reiterates that the Fund needs at least $2 million each year to meaningfully fulfil its mandate to support victims.**

28. **In line with the message of the Secretary-General to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (2 December 2014), Member States, businesses, foundations and other potential donors are encouraged to support the Fund so that it can provide crucial rehabilitation assistance to victims of modern slavery worldwide. Contributions should reach the Fund before November 2015 for them to be duly recorded by the United Nations Treasurer in advance of the twentieth session of the Board, to be held from 23 to 27 November 2015.**